

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 5324

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, TU (ECEVIT, BULENT)
SUBJ: BULENT ECEVIT: WHERE IS HE HEADED?

1. INTRODUCTION: REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP)
CHARIMAN AND OPPOSITION LEADER BULENT ECEVIT, WHO WILL VISIT
WASHINGTON IN LATE JULY, HAS REACHED A CRITICAL JUNCTURE
IN HIS POLITICAL LIFE. IF HE DOES NOT LEAD HIS PARTY BACK
TO POWER IN THE 1977 ELECTIONS, HIS AUTHORITY WITHIN THE
PARTY WILL BE UNDERMINED AND THE CHANCE OF HIS BECOMING
PRIME MINISTER AGAIN WILL BE GREATLY DIMINISHED. DURING
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THE PAST 30 MONTHS, ECEVIT HAS EXPERIENCED THE EXHILARATION

OF UNEXPECTEDLY BECOMING PRIME MINISTER AND AS A RESULT OF THE CYPRUS CRISIS OF 1974, BECOMING A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL FIGURE. HE HAS ALSO SUFFERED THE FIRST MAJOR DEFEAT OF HIS AMAZINGLY SUCCESSFUL POLITICAL CAREER-- THAT OF BEING UNABLE TO ARRANGE EITHER NEW ELECTIONS OR A NEW COALITION AFTER HIS RESIGNATION AS PRIME MINISTER IN SEPTEMBER 1974. HE IS THE UNDISPUTED LEADER OF HIS PARTY AND--AT LEAST TO MOST FOREIGNERS-- THE MOST ATTRACTIVE AND DYNAMIC POLITICAN IN TURKEY. HOWEVER, HE IS NOT ONLY CHARISMATIC BUT ENIGMATIC AS WELL, AND IN HIS EFFORT TO CEMENT LEFTIST SUPPORT HE HAS LEFT HIS POSITION ON MANY FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES EITHER UNCLEAR OR A CAUSE FOR US CONCERN.

2. BACKGROUND: ECEVIT HAS A QUIET, UNASSUMING DEMEANOR WHICH DISGUISES HIS DRIVE. IF IT WERE NOT FOR HIS ATTRACTIVE PERSONALITY, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OVER THE YEARS OF GRASPING AMBITION BECAUSE OF HIS DRAMATICALLY SUCCESSFUL POLITICAL CAREER. HE WAS ONLY 36 YEARS OLD WHEN HE BECAME MINISTER OF LABOR IN 1961. BY 1966, HE WAS THE SECRETARY GENERAL (NUMBER TWO IN PARTY HIERARCHY) OF THE RPP. HE RESIGNED FROM THIS POSITION IN 1971 IN PROTEST AGAINST HIS PARTY'S DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE "ABOVE PARTIES" GOVERNMENT FORMED AFTER THE 1971 COUP BY MEMORANDUM. WITHIN A YEAR HE HAD MANAGED TO WREST CONTROL OF THE RPP FROM "GRAND OLD MAN" ISMET INONU, FORCING THE LATTER'S RESIGNATION AS PARTY CHAIRMAN.

3. A YEAR AND A HALF LATER IN THE GENERAL ELECTION OF OCTOBER 1973, THE RPP, IN A SURPRISING SHOW OF STRENGTH, BECAME THE LARGEST PARTY IN THE LOWER HOUSE, AND AFTER SEVERAL FALSE STARTS DURING A 101-DAY GOVERNMENT CRISIS WAS ABLE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT IN LATE FEBRUARY 1974. THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT WAS AN UNWIELDY COALITION BETWEEN THE PROGRESSIVE RPP AND ITS OPPOSITE, THE CONSERVATIVE ISLAM-ORIENTED NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) LED BY NECMETTIN ERBAKAN, THIS GOVERNMENT WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED A FAILURE HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR ITS DECISION TO INTERVENE MILITARILY IN CYPRUS IN JULY 1974. THIS ACTION-- WHICH OTHER GOVERNMENTS HAD NOT TAKEN IN OTHER PROVOCATIVE SITUATIONS-- MADE ECEVIT'S GOVERNMENT A GREAT

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SUCCESS IN PURELY DOMESTIC, SHORT-RANGE TERMS.

4. ECEVIT'S DECISION IN SEPTEMBER OF THAT YEAR TO RESIGN AS PRIME MINISTER WAS, HE SAID, THE RESULT OF ERBAKAN'S OBSTRUCTIONISM. HOWEVER, ECEVIT APPARENTLY CONUNTED ON FORMING A NEW COALITION WHICH WOULD VOTE FOR NEW GENERAL ELECTIONS SO THAT HE MIGHT CAPITALIZE ON HIS ROLE AS HERO OF THE CYPRUS INTERVENTION. THE RESIGNATION LED TO HIS

FIRST MAJOR POLITICAL FAILURE. IN A CAREER MARKED BY CAREFUL, QUIET GROUNDWORK FOLLOWED BY SEEMINGLY AUDACIOUS STROKES OF POLITICAL GENIUS, ECEVIT FOR THE FIRST TIME IGNORED THE GROUNDWORK. APPARENTLY SOMEWHAT BEMUSED BY HIS OWN PERSONAL POPULARITY AND THE POPULARITY OF THE CYPRUS OPERATION, ECEVIT PLACED HIS TRUST IN AN UNSTABLE ALLY--FERRUH BOZBEYLI, THE LEADER OF THE STRIFE-RIDDEN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP). BOZBEYLI WAS NOT ABLE TO DELIVER HIS PARTY'S SUPPORT FOR EITHER A NEW COALITION OR EARLY ELECTIONS.

5. AFTER MANY MONTHS OF ADJUSTMENT, DURING WHICH HE CONTINUED TO WORK AND HOPE FOR EARLY ELECTIONS, ECEVIT NOW SEEMS TO HAVE SETTLED INTO HIS ROLE AS OPPOSITION LEADER AND TO HAVE RECONCILED HIMSELF TO WAITING UNTIL THE SCHEDULED OCTOBER 1977 ELECTIONS. WHILE WAITING, ECEVIT HAS CONCENTRATED ON DEVELOPING HIS INTERNATIONAL CONSTITUENCY. DURING THE PAST YEAR HE HAS VISITED SCANDINAVIA, WESTERN EUROPE, ROMANIA, LIBYA, YUGOSLAVIA AND THE SOVIET UNION. HE IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES IN JULY. AFTER THAT TRIP, HE WILL PROBABLY BEGIN PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1977 ELECTIONS.

6. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND PHILOSOPHY: ECEVIT'S PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS HAVE MADE HIM A FORMIDABLY POPULAR FIGURE. HE IS SUPERBLY ARTICULATE, NOT ONLY IN HIS NATIVE TURKISH (IN WHICH HE IS HIGHLY REGARDED FOR HIS EFFECTIVE USE OF THE "NEW TURKISH" VOCABULARY) BUT ALSO IN ENGLISH. PHYSICALLY, HE IS NOT A PARTICULARLY HANDSOME OR STRIKING INDIVIDUAL, BUT HE HAS A PRESENCE THAT COMMANDS ATTENTION AND INSPIRES CONFIDENCE. HE IS AN INTELLECTUAL, ALTHOUGH --UNLIKE HIS RIVAL SULEYMAN DEMIREL, THE PEASANT "SHEPHERD BOY"--HE NEVER GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE. HE IS A SOMETIME CONFIDENTIAL

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POET, WHO ENJOYS THE COMPANY OF ACADEMICIANS, WRITERS AND ARTISTS, BUT HE CAN ALSO CONVINCE PEASANTS OF HIS CONCERN FOR THEIR WELFARE. HE IS THE FIRST TURKISH POLITICIAN SINCE MENDERES TO DEMONSTRATE SIGNIFICANT CHARISMATIC APPEAL.

7. ECEVIT'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY IS VAGUE AND PROBABLY BEST DESCRIBED AS A TURKISH VERSION OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY. ECEVIT SHARES THE COMMON TURKISH CONCEIT THAT THE TURKISH PEOPLE AND STATE ARE UNIQUE AND MUST THEREFORE DEVELOP UNIQUELY TURKISH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS. HE BELIEVES THAT TURKISH POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT HAS REACHED THE STAGE WHERE THE MASSES OF PEOPLE MUST BECOME MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE GOVERNMENTAL PROCESS. IT WAS THIS IDEA MORE THAN ANY OTHER THAT EVENTUALLY BROUGHT HIM INTO DIRECT CONFLICT WITH HIS PATERNALISTIC, ELITIST, ONE-TIME MENTOR, THE LATE

ISMET INONU. ECEVIT'S GOAL WHEN HE TOOK CONTROL OF THE RPP WAS TO SHIFT ITS ORIENTATION, TO MAKE IT A PARTY WHICH COULD APPEAL TO THE PEASANT AND WORKER AS WELL AS TO ITS TRADITIONAL CONSTITUENTS-- THE INTELLECTUAL, THE BUREAUCRAT AND THE PROFESSIONAL SOLIDER. IN THE PROCESS, HE PURGED THE PARTY OF MANY OF ITS MORE CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS AND GAVE IT A MORE NEARLY POPULIST IMAGE. THE 1973 ELECTIONS DEMONSTRATED SUBSTANTIAL SUCCESS IN THIS EFFORT.

8. THE RPP'S POSITION IN THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM IS MOVING INCREASINGLY TO THE LEFT OF CENTER. ECEVIT PROBABLY TENDS TOWARD THE CENTRIST ELEMENT OF THE PARTY BUT HE IS A ROMANTIC AND IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO LEFTIST SLOGANEERING. MOREOVER, ECEVIT, FEARFUL OF THE COMPETITION TO HIS PARTY FROM EXTREME LEFT PARTIES, HAS BEEN UNWILLING TO DISCIPLINE THE EXTREMIST ELEMENTS IN THE RPP. HE IS SIMILARLY RELUCTANT TO DEFINE THE LEFTWARD LIMITS OF THE PARTY. HIS PUBLIC POSITION IS THAT " THE PEOPLE WILL DRAW THE FRONTIERS OF OUR LEFTISM." AS THE PARTY GROWS AND ENCOMPASSES A WIDER IDEOLOGICAL RANGE, ECEVIT'S BALANCING ACT--WHICH SEEMS TO CONSIST OF BEING ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN--IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT.

9. INTERNATIONALLY, ECEVIT LEANS TOWARDS THE WEST: HE IS A WESTERN MAN, WITH A WESTERN EDUCATION AND TASTES. (BECAUSE

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OF THIS HE IS MUCH EASIER TO DEAL WITH THAN MOST OTHER TURKISH POLITICIANS.) AS LEADER OF THE RPP, HE IS THE GUARDIAN OF ATATURK'S GOAL OF MAKING TURKEY A MODERN WESTERN STATE. THERE IS, HOWEVER, AN AMBIVALENCE IN HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WEST. THIS IS PARTLY BECAUSE HE SHARES WITH MOST OF HIS FELLOW COUNTRYMEN A DEGREE OF XENOPHOBIA AND A RESENTFUL MEMORY OF THE WESTERN POSITION OF INFLUENCE IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE. IT IS ALSO A REFLECTION OF HIS DISLIKE OF CAPITALISM. (THIS DOES NOT AFFECT ECEVIT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ALL WESTERN COUNTRIES SINCE HE DOES NOT SEEM TO CONSIDER COUNTRIES WITH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS TO BE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES.) IN ADDITION TO THIS GENERAL AMBIVALENCE TOWARDS THE WEST, ECEVIT APPARENTLY SHARES SOME OF HIS PARTY'S TRADITIONAL ANTI-PATHY FOR THE US-- AN ANTI-PATHY BASED ON SUPPOSED US PREFERENCE FOR THE RIVAL JUSTICE PARTY. MOREOVER, DESPITE HIS APPARENT SOPHISTICATION, ECEVIT SEEMS TO BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE THIRD WORLD RHETORIC WHICH ASCRIBES TO THE US THE SINS OF IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, AND RACISM.

10. ECEVIT'S ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY IS BASED ON A VAGUE MIX OF STATE CAPITALISM, COOPERATIVES, AND OTHER "PEOPLE-DIRECTED"

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS. HE PROFESSES A BELIEF IN A MIXED ECONOMY, BUT HIS CLEAR PREFERENCE IS FOR NON-CAPITALISTIC ENTITIES. (NEWSPAPERS REPORT THAT DURING A VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA IN MAY, ECEVIT EXPRESSED ADMIRATION FOR THE YUGOSLAV SYSTEM OF WORKER SELF-MANAGEMENT AND SID THERE WERE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN RPP GOALS AND THE "PROGRESS MADE IN YUGOSLAVIA.") HE IS UNEASY WITH THE CONCEPT OF CAPITALISM WHICH HE VIEWS SIMPLY AS A SYSTEM ALLOWING A FEW PEOPLE TO BECOME INORDINATELY WEALTHY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE MASSES.

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MOREOVER, FOR SEVERAL YEARS A RECURRENT

THEME OF ECEVIT'S RHETORIC HAS BEEN THE THREAT POSED TO TURKEY BY "MONOPOLISTIC MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS"--THE ULTIMATE EVIL OF CAPTIALISM.

11. FOREIGN POLICY TRADITIONALLY PLAYS A SECONDARY, BUT VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN TURKISH ELECTIONS. THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF ECEVIT'S APPROACH TO MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES:

A. THE AEGEAN: ECEVIT HAS BEEN OUTSPOKEN IN HIS CRITICISM OF THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT'S "SOFTNESS" IN PRESSING CONFIDENTIAL

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TURKISH CLAIMS IN THE AEGEAN. HIS STATEMENTS HAVE CONSISTENTLY BEEN HIGHLY NATIONALISTIC AND IN CONFLICT WITH HIS IMAGE AS A RESPONSIBLE STATESMAN. UNFORTUNATELY, WE CANNOT EXPECT ECEVIT TO MODERATE HIS POSITION AS ELECTION TIME APPROACHES.

B. CYPRUS: TO DATE ECEVIT HAS BEEN RESTRAINED IN HIS CRITICISM OF THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT'S CYPRUS POLICY. THE THRUST OF MOST OF HIS COMMENTS HAS BEEN TO URGE THE GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED WITH NEGOTIATIONS. HE (AND MORE PROMINENTLY, HIS PARTY) HAS HELPED POUR COLD WATER ON THE IDEA OF A TURKISH CYPRIOT UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. WE SUSPECT ECEVIT WILL MAINTAIN HIS MODERATE STANCE ON CYPRUS--IF ONLY BECAUSE HE IS ALREADY ON THE RECORD AS WILL TO MAKE CONCESSIONS FOR A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT.

C. NATO: DURING THE PAST THREE MONTHS ECEVIT HAS SPOKEN OF A "NEW DEFENSE CONCEPT". THIS CONCEPT HAS NOT BEEN FULLY EXPLAINED, BUT IT SEEMS TO INVOLVE TURKEY'S REMAINING IN NATO WHILE EXPANDING THE NON-NATO ELEMENT OF TURKISH DEFENSE. SINCE TURKEY'S DEFENSE RESOURCES ARE LIMITED THIS WOULD IMPLY A LESSENING OF THE TURKEY-NATO RELATIONSHIP. ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE "NEW CONCEPT" SEEMS TO BE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DOMESTIC ARMS INDUSTRY. WHETHER THIS REFLECTS A SERIOUS INITIATIVE OR A DESIRE TO JUMP ON A NATIONALISTIC BANDWAGON IS NOT CLEAR. (ONE AFTER-EFFECT OF THE EMBARGO HAS BEEN AN UNDERSTANDABLE--IF UNREALISTIC--DESIRE TO AVOID THE DANGER OF FUTURE EMBARGOES BY CREATING A NATIONAL ARMS INDUSTRY.) WHEN ECEVIT WAS PRIME MINISTER HE WAS A STRONG ADVOCATE OF TURKEY'S PARTICIPATION IN NATO. HIS RECENT COMMENTS MAY SIMPLY BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO PRE-ELECTION RHETORIC; HOWEVER, THEY MAY ALSO REPRESENT A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN HIS THINKING. (ECEVIT IS SENSITIVE TO HIS PUBLIC RECORD AND ONLY RARELY DOES HE MAKE UNGUARDED PUBLIC COMMENTS. IT CAN, THEREFORE, BE ASSUMED THAT HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON SERIOUS ISSUES ARE CONSIDERED VIEWS.)

D. U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS: AS NOTED EARLIER, ECEVIT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE U.S. IS AMBIVALENT. WHILE HE CONCEDES THAT THE U.S. IS TURKEY'S MOST IMPORTANT ALLY, HE SEEMS TO

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FIND THAT IDEA DISQUIETING. A CLOSE TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP DOES NOT FIT NEATLY INTO HIS CONCEPT OF TURKEY'S INTERNATIONAL ROLE -- IN PART BECAUSE OF HIS IMAGE OF THE U.S. AS A CAPITALIST, IMPERIALIST POWER; AND IN PART, BECAUSE OF HIS NATIONALISTIC VISION THAT TURKEY SHOULD PLAY A MORE PROMINENT INTERNATIONAL ROLE -- A ROLE WHICH CANNOT BE PLAYED BY A RELATIVELY WEAK STATE CLOSELY ALLIED TO A SUPERPOWER. FINALLY, ALTHOUGH HIS EXPERIENCE AND SOPHISTICATION SUGGEST HE KNOWS BETTER, ECVIT IS WILLING TO ATTRIBUTE TO THE U.S. INORDINATE POWERS AND QUESTIONABLE MOTIVES. COMMENTING IN APRIL ON THE DIVISION AMONG LEFTIST GROUPTS IN TURKEY, ECEVIT TOLD HIS PARTY ASSEMBLY, "I BELIEVE THERE IS NO WISE AND TRUE LEFTIST IN TURKEY OR IN THE WORLD WHO DOESN'T KNOW HOW CERTAIN DARK ORGANIZATIONS AND FORCES ENGAGE IN PLOTS IN ORDER TO DIVIDE THE LEFT, WEAKEN IT AND SET IT FIGHTING WITHIN ITSELF."

12. OUTLOOK: WHERE DOES ECEVIT GO FROM HERE? ANY ANSWER IS SPECULATIVE, BUT A SAFE STARTING POINT IS THAT ECEVIT IN OPPOSITION SEEMS LESS RESPONSIBLE AND MORE EXTREMIST THAN HE WAS WHEN IN POWER. EMBOFFS ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE RPP TO DISCOUNT ECEVIT'S STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION, ARGUING THAT THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICE WILL FORCE MODERATION ON HIM. THIS MAY BE TRUE; AND IN FACT, WHILE HE WAS PRIME MINISTER, ECEVIT GENERALLY PRESENTED THE IMAGE OF A REASONABLE, MODERATE MAN. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS WORTH REMEMBERING THAT OF ECEVIT'S THREE MAJOR "ACCOMPLISHMENTX" DURING HIS NINE MONTHS IN OFFICE -- THE GENERAL AMNESTY, THE RESUMPTION OF OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION AND THE INTERVENTION IN CYPRUS -- TWO INVOLVED DIRECT VIOLATION OF AGREEMENTS WITH THE UNITED STATES. MOREOVER, THE EXPERIENCE OF POWER DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE ALTERED SIGNIFICANTLY ECEVIT'S PREVIOUSLY NOTED AMBIVALENCE TOWARD THE U.S. NOR DOES IT SEEM TO HAVE DISABUSED HIM OF HIS FASCINATION WITH IDEOLOGICAL "PROGRESSIVES". UPON HIS RETURN FROM HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION ECEVIT WAS QUOTED AS EXPRESSING ADMIRATION FOR CERTAIN ASPECTS OF SOVIET SOCIETY. ("IN

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THE SOVIET UNION GREAT VALUE IS ATTACHED TO CULTURE AND THE ARTS. THEY DO NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT DEVELOPMENT SHOULD ENRICH HUMAN LIFE MORALLY.") HE ALSO DELCARED HIMSELF TO BE CONVINCED THAT SOVIET LEADERSHIP "SINCERELY WISHED TO LIVE IN PEACE AND MUTAL SECURITY WITH TURKEY."

13. THERE DOES THUS APPEAR TO BE A DEFINITE IDEOLOGICAL FACTOR IN ECEVIT'S BEHAVIOR. NEVERTHELESS, OUR OBSERVATIONS OF THIS ATTRACTIVE, PERSUASIVE, INTELLIGENT MAN HAVE CONVINCED US THAT THE SINGLE MOST POWERFUL MOTIVATING FORCE BEHIND HIS ACTIONS IS DOESTIC POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. THIS IS NOT TO SUGGEST HE CONSTANTLY VILATES HIS PRINCIPLES IN PURSUIT OF SHORT-TERM POLITICAL GANN, BUT NEITHER DOES HE LET IDEOLOGY PREVENT HIM FROM PURSUING WHAT HE CONSIDERS A PRAGMATIC POLICY. DESPITE HIS FASCINATION WITH THE EAST, ECEVIT STILL FACES WESTWARD. RECENT WORLD DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING THE U.S. ARMS EMBARGO AND TURKEY'S NEARLY COMPLETE ISOLATION ON CYPRUS, HAVE BEGUN TO UNDERMINE THAT STANCE. IF ECEVIT SHOULD SENSE THE POSSIBILITY OF A MAJORITY TREND AWAY FROM THE WEST DEVELOPING IN TURKEY, HE WOULD PROBABLY CHOOSE TO LEAD IT RATHER THAN FOLLOW. THUS, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST, HE IS LEAVING HIS OPTIONS OPEN.

14. ECEVIT'S DRIVE TO RETURN TO POWER IS NOW FOCUSSED ON THE OCTOBER 1977 ELECTIONS. WIH 16 MONTHS TO GO WE CANNOT PREDICT THE OUTCOME OF THOSE ELECTIONS. HOWEVER, WE CAN PROJECT RECENT TRENDS, AND THOSE DO NOT BODE WELL FOR ECEVIT. THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT IN RECENT LEGISLATIVE TE TS HAS APPEARED STRONGER THAN WHEN IT CAME TO POWER. WHILE THE RPP DID FAIRLY WELL IN THE 1975 PARTIAL SENATORNAL ELECTIONS, THE JP PERFORMED RELATIVELY BETTER IN THAT IT WAS ABLE TO REVERSE THE DOWNWARD TREND OF THE 1973 ELECTIONS. RECENT MAYORAL ELECTIONS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES AT BEST SUGGEST A STANDOFF BETWEEN THE MAJOR PARTIES. TURKEY'S ECOMIC SITUATION, ALTHOUGH FAR FROM IDEAL, APPEARS TO FAVOR THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SHORT TERM (I.E. UNTIL ELECTION TIME). PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, FACTIONAL FIGHTING WITHIN THE RPP DURING THE LAST FEW MONTHS APPEARS TO HAVE SHATTERED
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PARTY UNITY (ANKARA 5008) PRIVATE QUARRELS HAVE BECOME BITTER PUBLIC DEBATES, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE HE BECAME PARTY CHAIRMAN ECEVIT IS DRAWING CRITICISM WITHIN THE PARTY FOR HIS LACK OF LEADERSHIP. WE ANTICIPATE THAT MANY OF THESE DISPUTES WILL BE PAPERED OVER AS THE

ELECTION APPROACHES, BUT THE DEGREE OF SUCCESS AND
PRMANENCE OF THAT REPAIR PROCESS WILL DEPEND HEAVILY ON
ECEVIT'S EFFORTS. IF HE IS NOT SUCCESSFUL, HIS PARTY WILL
SUFFER, HE WILL BE BLAMED AND HIS POLITICAL FUTURE WILL
BE UNCERTAIN. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, HE CAN REVERSE THE
PRESENT TREND AND PUT HIS PARTY BACK IN ORDER, HE WOULD
HAVE A CHANCE OF EMERGING FROM THE OCTOBER 1977 ELECTIONS
AS THE LEADER OF A MAJORITY OR NEAR-MAJORITY PARTY,
AND CONSEQUENTLY A CHANCE OF BECOMING THE DOMINAT TURKISH
POLITICAL LEADER FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS.
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